



CA DEPARTMENT  
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# Braille Bites

## California School for the Blind

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Special  
Graduation  
Issue

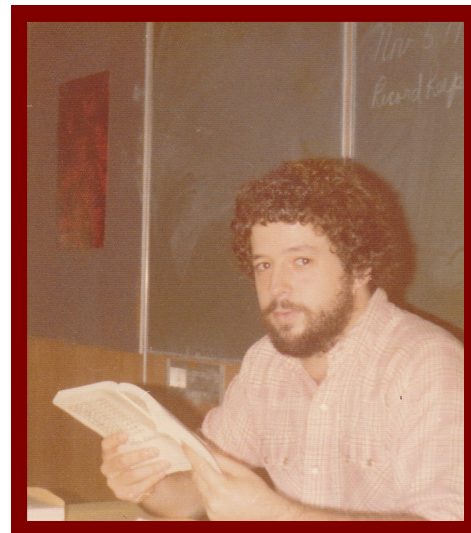
### Superintendent's message

Albert Einstein said, "The most aggravating thing about the younger generation is that I no longer belong to it." With that in mind, you will find a picture of me from 1974 as a very young teacher in New York City. That person had no idea what the future held.

Welcome to our graduation issue for 2013! Graduation is a special event in each student's life and a time to reflect on where we have been, what we've achieved and where we're going. We are reminded that we have watched some of these young people grow up here at CSB.

Inside you will read comments written by our creative and caring seniors in the class of 2013. They express their gratitude for the people and the learning opportunities they've encountered at CSB – and their excitement at what the future holds for them, including work,

By: Stuart Wittenstein



independent living, and higher education. In addition you will find interesting articles describing more of the very types of enriching learning opportunities specified in our graduates' columns.

Thanks for your interest and support in the exciting programs and futures planning taking place at CSB. Have a wonderful and safe summer and look for more issues of the *Braille Bites* when school returns in August.

## A field trip to the Lighthouse for the Blind

By: Tracy Soriano

On Thursday, February 21, 2013, Nanako Yamada's class, along with mobility instructor Cheryl Besden and Tracy Soriano, went on a field trip to the San Leandro Lighthouse for the Blind.

We toured the facility, where they showed us how they made individual toilet paper packets for MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) for the military. Each MRE contained: a meal, napkin, utensil and small toilet paper packet.

The most interesting thing that we liked about the facility was:

**Ashley:** She was intrigued by the size of the toilet paper roll, which was taller than she was, and how they turned it into a small individual toilet paper packet that she could fit into her pocket. She stated that she would not be interested in working in such a facility mainly because she didn't want to have to relocate to the Bay Area from her current residence.

**Dakota:** The most interesting part about the facility for me was the conveyor belt that is used to move the toilet paper around. I don't think I would be interested in this type of work mainly because of relocating to the Bay Area as well.

**Travis:** The most interesting thing about the facility for me was the machine that the operator used to slice the toilet paper into smaller sections so that they would fit into their packaging. I would very much like to work in this facility at some point in the future. I would like to work there because it is a job that I feel I could do easily as a visually impaired person.

**Arthur:** The most interesting thing about the facility was meeting Jerry and his dog and watching him put the giant roll of toilet paper onto the conveyor belt so that the operator could cut the toilet paper into thinner pieces to be put into small packets. I think that I would be very interested in working at this facility, because it's close to my home and it is a job that I could see myself doing.



## Kennedy High School project

By: Barbara Maher

Four **CSB** students, Rebecca, Abel, Isaac and Will, are taking Food Chemistry at Kennedy High School. As a part of the curriculum, the class participated in a program called "Getting Invested". This program was funded by a grant through the Computer History Museum in Mountain View. Students traveled to the Museum twice this term to participate. They were given the challenge of coming up with an idea that could combine food and technology – a problem that could be solved using technology. The **CSB** team also included three other students from the class. A class of high school students in Monterey and Mexico also participated. The students from Mexico were available through SKYPE and came to the museum in March to meet the Kennedy High School students.



The teams had to make a presentation to a team of professionals who evaluated their idea and gave practical suggestions on how to implement it. These presentations were done on the big stage at the Computer History Museum and were filmed by museum staff.

The problem these students decided on solving was to set up a cell phone application alert system to be used during a disaster. The system would direct people to shelters and food sources through the use of technology provided by the Red Cross disaster satellite. Messages transmitted via satellite would direct people to shelters which would have food and water available to them and would use the location being broadcast from their cell phones. For those living in low income areas where people were not as likely to have cell phones, life-saving messages would be sent to solar powered billboards. Cell phone GPS signals could also be used to locate people in distress.

This system was well received by the people evaluating the presentations. It was thought that this could actually work with some well thought out ways to build the application and get the funding needed to make it happen. Our high school students certainly do have some good ideas!



# Congratulations to the 2013 graduating students

## Roberto

My family and teachers encouraged me to attend the short course program at the school. After much hesitation, I attended the **CSB** short course program in 2008. In my 8th grade year, I kept returning to the short course program and I convinced myself that the school was not that bad, and I suggested to my instructors and family that I wanted to attend the school full time. Since attending the school, I was given the opportunity to work at the tech lab by Jerry Kuns, that's where I found my true self. As the years went by I continued to stay in **CSB** even when it was difficult. I had to adjust to the food, accept the rules and stay out of trouble. Overall I like this school more that when I first started attending.

I appreciate those who encouraged me to attend **CSB**. If I had never taken this opportunity, I would of probably never have found my true passion with technology, and most importantly I would have never had Edward, my son who I enjoy spending time with. Life is full of surprises, just like this pathway which has been leading me to my future.



# Eric

I came to **CSB** as a Pre-school student. I started out as a Day Student being transported on a daily basis from home which was then in Hayward. When my family moved to Salida, my parents wanted me to continue with the outstanding education that I was receiving at **CSB**. As a student staying in the dormitory during the week, I had many opportunities to participate in trips to events in the community. I have attended games at the Oakland Coliseum, hockey games in San Jose and even went to a Stockton Thunders game.

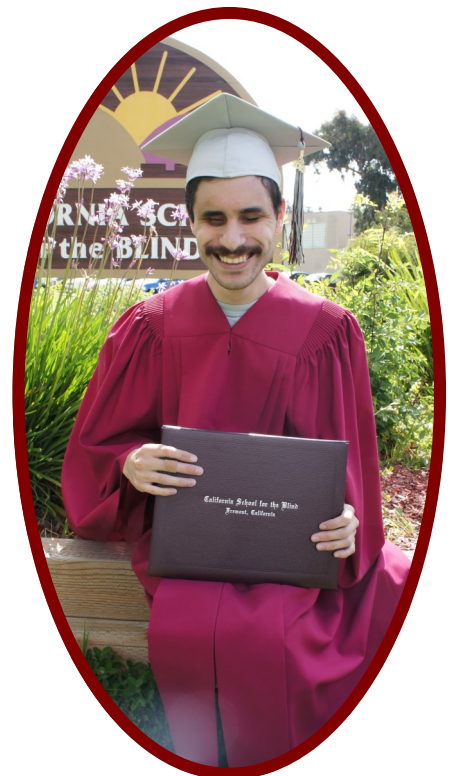
I developed as a music composer when I was eight. One of my compositions was submitted in a competition of elementary school musicians in Fremont and won. My piece was played at the Fremont Symphony Orchestra Children's Concert.

Over the years, I have learned to cook for myself. My favorite food to make is grilled cheese sandwiches.

My hobby is listening to books on tape. Recently, I listened to the whole series of Harry Potter books in Spanish. I have also enjoyed listening to "the Hobbit" in Spanish.

The best thing about attending the **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind was being able to do activities that I would never have had a chance to do if I had been in the regular public school system. For example, the Physical Education Program introduced me to kayaking, bowling, canoeing, beep baseball and hiking.

I want to thank all of the staff at **CSB** for giving me such a wonderful start in life.



# Arthur

I came to **CSB** when I was 18 years old. My first teacher was Ms. Schmoyer. In her class, I learned cooking and math. Cheryl was my mobility teacher. She taught me about planning a trip. My speech teacher was Vic and he taught me about communicating with people. My favorite school activities are hiking and bowling. My favorite jobs are recycling and delivering supplies. After graduating from **CSB**, I would like to work.



# Jot

I will always remember the wonderful friends I made during these past 10 years. I will also remember the wonderful art program along with the wonderful art teacher.



Something else I will probably remember is waking up to the annoying lawn mower. The lawn mower was, and still is running somewhere around this campus. The air smells of freshly cut grass, and gas from the lawn mower. As for the friends, I have some really good friends who I will miss a lot. I hope to stay in touch with some of these people and all the best to everyone. I will miss you all!!



# Travis

I've been going to the California School for the Blind for nine years. I first heard about **CSB** from my visual instruction teacher, Donna Wittenstein.

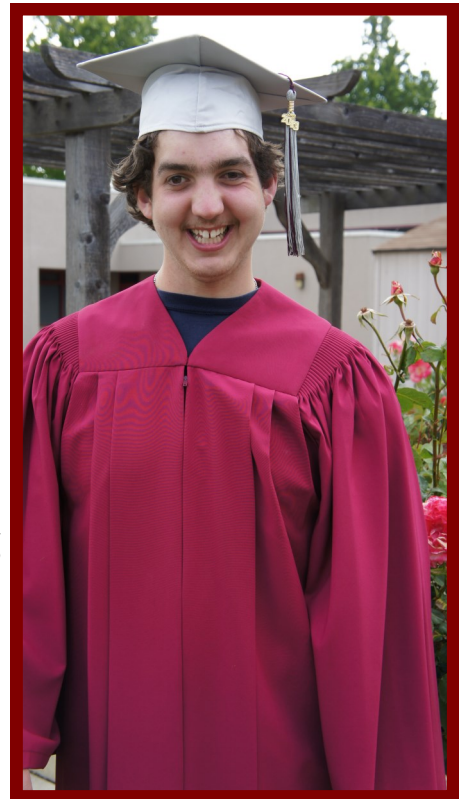
When I decided to go to **CSB**, I was a little afraid. Then I started to have some fun at school. It almost felt like being at summer camp for the blind because not only the students were blind, but some of the staff were blind as well. They were all helpful in their own ways.

A lot of the teachers took me on really fun field trips, such as to Marine World and the LightHouse Industries in San Leandro. Some of the staff was helpful on job searches. I learned how to get contact information from businesses. In the dorms, I met a lot of the counselors with many personalities. They all helped me with daily living skills and made it fun! With these skills I have made many accomplishments. Some of these include being patient with myself, becoming more organized and being punctual.

I won some awards too! I had a couple of my art pieces accepted into the Helen Keller Art Show. One time I felt like I was on a roll.

First I won a card game that I was playing with friends at the dorm. Next I won first place at the Braille Bee. Then, after that, I received a letter saying that I had won first place at the American Printing House for the Blind Art Competition in Louisville Kentucky! My family and I went to Kentucky to accept the award. It was a great experience that I will never forget.

After all these years, I would like most of all to thank all my teachers, counselors, and friends for all their help and encouragement. I would have never made it without them. I will always remember all the fun times I had at **CSB**. Thank you!



# Derek

My name is Derek Hitzel.

I was born September 14, 1991.

After struggling through public school, my parents discovered the **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind. I transferred to the school in 2006.

I am leaving **CSB** with the skills I need to achieve my full potential in life. In addition to knowing Braille reading and writing, I am grateful for the experience of having developed as a valuable musician. I got to play in the Mission Ensemble and the renowned **CSB** Jazz Ensemble. The experience has taken me to places I never thought possible. My favorite trip was to the Train Museum in Sacramento. Music Director, Wayne Siligo, has taken us young musicians to Sacramento to play for the Department of Education, Caltrans, a groundbreaking at the Bay Area Rapid Transit, and many more opportunities to play my bass guitar in front of people.

As a result of attending **CSB**, I feel that my strengths are in technology, Braille and music. I want to thank the faculty and staff for all that you have given me.





# A' Laura

I've been at **CSB** for five years. Some of the things I enjoyed the most were getting to know people, making friends and being at a school where no one judges you. It also provides support and accepts who you are as a person. All the classes provided here taught me the skills I need to venture out into the world on my own. All of the life lessons, friendships and skills have made me who I am today.



# Anthony

In the 4 years I've been at **CSB**, I made a lot of friends. They invented "mer faces." They call each other "mer faces." I am always laughing in my class because of them.

I like English and Math. I like cooking, shopping, computers, and orientation and mobility. I am getting better in braille.

I see myself as a Tiger. My personality is like a tiger, feisty and stubborn.

I want to stay in the bay area after **CSB**. I want to go to an available group home.



# Alma

I have been at **CSB** for three years now. I have been in Ms. Bybee's transition class for one year. I strive to be very independent in class and I have a lot of friends. I was this year's CSB prom queen!! I also enjoy working on my swimming skills. I also like my O&M class because I like to go to new places. I like to be independent by making my own appointments and I only ask for help when I need it. I like a lively environment, where I can be active in sharing and learning from friends. I have been in the Apartment Living Program for almost 2 years and I love the challenges of cooking on my own and trying out different recipes. I don't like dancing very much, but I enjoy a great party. I still haven't decided what I plan on doing after graduation.



# Andres

I liked working here at **CSB** and all the classes. The activities were great. I liked Art, especially painting and clay sculptures. In the Rocket Shop Café I liked working hard, especially being cashier and stacking chips and sodas. I also enjoyed meeting people. I liked working in the bakery because it was good to learn how to bake bread and pizza and it helped me get the confidence to cook more. In our classroom garden I liked to plant onions and different kinds of seeds like cilantro and tomatoes. In the apartments I learned to be more independent and I liked it a lot.

When I leave **CSB** I want to continue in adult school, find a good job and continue improving on the skills I have learned at **CSB**.



I've learned a lot here. All good skills that I can use in my life. Thank you **CSB**!



# SNOW DAY



Thank you to the Parents  
and Friends association  
for making Snow Day  
happen again this year!!!

### Lucky Touch --- The only Braille Fortune Cookie Company in the world

The company's board of directors is composed of five students and eight students who braille the fortune sayings for the company. Besides getting paid for their job, the Board of Directors and the braillists are treated with a Chinese lunch or dinner at the end of the school year.

**The Board of Directors had a field trip to San Francisco China Town on April 8<sup>th</sup>.** The following are what they wrote about the trip:

**Julissa C.** --- On April 8<sup>th</sup>, the Lucky Touch crew and I went to China Town to purchase a few things to resale at the Spring Concert. We had the pleasure of exploring China Town with Silvana and Marcia. For lunch we enjoyed a delicious dim sum meal. The lunch was particularly special for me because it was my first time trying dim sum. Going through all the shops with Marcia was lots of fun because she loves to shop, just like me. Silvana showed us some Chinese fruits and vegetables that were interesting to feel. Overall, I had a great day out, and I hope we can do it again.



**Marissa G.** --- First of all I want to thank Silvana for taking us all there. I had fun. While being there I saw lots of new things that I have never seen before, such as key chains that have an insect inside them. Although I don't like insects I thought that was pretty cool. I enjoyed trying new foods. I don't tend to eat pork but I gave it a shot. My most favorite food that I tried was the shrimp dumpling.

**Alex H.** --- I learned a little bit about the Chinese culture and ate lunch at a Chinese restaurant. I was also amazed at all the different shops around the area. I also got a chance to look at the interesting artifacts in the variety of shops. This experience was excellent and I wish to do it again in the future.

**William J.** --- On Monday, April 8, 2013 the Board of Directors of Lucky Touch visited San Francisco's China Town. It was a very fun visit. We took B.A.R.T. over to San Francisco and walked to a dim sum restaurant. The food there was amazing. It was authentic Chinese food. They would bring all of the food around on carts in little bamboo steam bowls or on little trays and you just take what you want and they mark a tally. They gave you a bill at the end based on how many dishes you had. After we ate almost every different type of food that they served, we walked down a street full of shops. We were looking for interesting things that we



could put the Braille fortune cookies in. It was very interesting because Silvana showed us a bunch of vegetables and fruits that you don't see at a common "Safeway" or "Raley's". We went into a couple of different stores looking for fancy boxes and bags. While we were in there we also found some pretty interesting stuff. I am an avid knife collector; I found barrels of plastic, wood and rubber Samurai swords. I bought several things. I got an amazing incense burner for my mother's birthday, and I got my sister a couple of things that she could hang in her room that would reflect light all over like a crystal, a panda ring and a really nice medicine bag. We also found some beautiful bags to resale at the spring concert. When we were on the way back by B.A.R.T., there was some electrical problem and we were back to school almost 8 o'clock. We were tired but it was a fun trip. I would love to go back to China Town again sometime.

**Roberto A.** --- On April 8, 2013, Silvana, Marcia and the Board of Directors of Lucky Touch Braille Fortune Cookie Company took a trip to San Francisco China Town. Our objective was to purchase a few items for the company. We visited several shops and one restaurant. Overall in my opinion this trip became an excellent learning experience.

As we walked towards China Town, the adventure and the learning experience had begun. As I observed my surrounds, my knowledge started to increase. We saw silk shoes and different styles of clothing that we could not find in regular stores. We found a variety of vegetables and fruits which I had never seen before in the grocery stores. We ended the walk to a restaurant. We ate a wide variety of Dim Sum trays, like shrimp dumplings, Sui mai, baked pork buns and lots of other dishes that I had never tasted before. Silvana, our tour guide, explained to us the history of Dim Sum.

The word "Dim Sum" means a touch of heart. Hundreds of years ago, the wife of a general wanted to show the gratitude to the soldiers by making small dumplings for them. We also walked through the Gate to China Town. Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who overthrew the corrupted Ching Dynasty Government,

wrote a famous saying on the top "The world belongs to all of us". Every culture has its own interesting story to tell. Before leaving China Town, we found what we wanted in a store that carries a lot of silk items.

I would like to thank Silvana, Marcia and the Lucky Touch crew for making this trip possible. Now I will not hesitate to go to a Dim Sum lunch. I can still remember the yummy taste when talking about it.



What community service project gets our students out into the fresh air, teaches them a valuable skill, while at the same time instilling a good work ethic? Why, shoveling sheep droppings at Ardenwood Farm, of course.

You read right-Classroom 55-4 put on the gloves and shoveled away on a beautiful late winter morning last February. As most of you know, Ardenwood is a working farm that includes a small flock of sheep. That means a small (well, not so small) amount of something else as well, and it has to be cleaned up.

It really isn't as bad as it sounds. All you have to do is push it into a pile, pull up a wheelbarrow alongside it, and scoop up the contents and place them in said farming implement.

We were rewarded for our efforts with the chance to pet a week-old lamb (their coats resemble a carpet) and feel freshly-laid eggs from the farm's chicken coop. This is a project we hope to repeat in the fall. As you can imagine, such work is always in demand!

Have a safe and fun  
Summer!



Mark your calendars,  
parent orientation day is on  
August, 26th, see you then!